

TRUE • *Hand 63*

Passive Obedience

Restor'd in 1710.

IN A

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DIALOGUE

Between A

Country - Man

AND A

True Patriot.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by S. Popping, at the *Raven* in
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THE

Passive Obedience

Reflected in 1710

IN A

DICTIONARY



COLLECTOR

AND

OF

Is it not to display a king in the
LONDON:
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TRUE PASSIVE OBEDIENCE

RESTOR'D

In 1710, &c.

Q. **W**HAT is *Passive Obedience*?
A. According to the definition of our Divines, it is a Duty, by which We are obliged to Obey Kings in all things they command, except they command things contrary to God's Will.

Q. What are those things, that are contrary to God's Will, which we are not to do, tho' a King commands us to do 'em?

A. We are not to Steal, Murther, and the like, tho' a King commands us: Nor are we to relinquish our Faith, tho' he commands us to do it.

Q. Is there any exception to the General Rule of Obeying the King, made in Scripture?

A. No exception is made, where the General Rule of Obeying the King is given. Yet is it to be understood, that we are not to relinquish our Faith, nor Murder, nor Steal, and the like, tho' a King commands us: Because doing these things are Sins.

Q. Is it no Sin to disobey a King in things that are Sinful, unjust or illegal?

A. No; because Sinful, unjust, and illegal things, are opposite to God's Will. Consequently, it's no

A 2

Sin

Sin to disobey a King, in things Sinful, illegal, or unjust.

Q. Are we not taught to Obey Kings without reserve?

A. Some perhaps may teach such Doctrine; but that Doctrine can't be true. If true, it's a Sin to disobey a King, even in things that are Sinful. But as I told you before, we are not to commit any Sin, tho' a King commands us. Consequently, we ought to disobey him in things Sinful. We are indeed to obey him in things not Sinful, illegal or unjust.

Q. Is every thing Sinful, that's Illegal?

A. In my Opinion it is.

Q. Is it Sinful to comply with Martyrdom, that being an unjust Command?

A. I cannot see how any Man can be excus'd from an imputation of Sin, that voluntarily complies with Martyrdom. For we are to Obey a King in suffering wrongfully for Religion, no more than we are to Obey him in changing our Religion, when he commands us: The former Command, as well as the latter, being contrary to God's Law. For in the Ten Commandments, Murder is forbid.

Q. Is Martyrdom, Murder?

A. It is suffering Death for Religion, when a King unjustly commands it: And that being unjust, must be Murder. God commands no Man to suffer for being a good Christian; and therefore he that suffers for being a good Christian, suffers wrongfully, and is Murder'd.

Q. Are Christians that voluntarily comply with Martyrdom, accessory to their own Deaths, and consequently guilty of the Sin of Murder, if they don't Fly or resist?

A. Without doubt, it's a Sin to suffer Murder to be committed on others, or our selves, if we can avoid it: For Murder is contrary to God's Laws. And Martyrdom being Murder, we ought to use all proper means to prevent it,

Q. May

Q. May we resist a Martyr-Maker ?

A. As much as we may a Murtherer: Resistance against a Martyr-maker or Murtherer, being no where forbid in Scripture. We are indeed to dye Martyrs, rather than forsake our Religion, if we are so constrain'd that we must do one or other. But we may refuse Martyrdom, if we can avoid it by Flight or Resistance ; because it is unjust.

Q. Are we guilty of Sin, if we don't resist a Martyr-maker ?

A. We are guilty of a Sin, so far as we submit voluntarily, and without Resistance, to the Loss of our Lives, when it is in our power to save our selves by Resistance. For God gave us our Lives ; and we should seem to slight his Divine Gift, consequently Sin in so doing, if we do not resist, nay, endeavour to Kill any one that unjustly designs to Murder us.

Q. Is it not a Sin to kill, or endeavour to kill one that attempts Murder ?

A. In my Opinion it can be no Sin : It is rather Justice, and consequently a Vertue, to kill one, that would kill unjustly.

Q. Is there no positive Law, by which we are oblig'd to obey Magistrates ?

A. Yes, God commands by *Moses*, that *We Honour and Obey the King* ; and by *St. Paul*, that *We be subject to the Higher Powers*.

Q. Are we to Obey Kings without Limitation, as these Commands seem to express ?

A. No : For tho' these Commands are General, and have no exceptions annex'd to 'em, where they are commanded ; yet all Kings are Limited by the Laws of God, and by the Laws of Nature : Nay some of 'em are Limited by the Laws of the Country which they Govern.

Q. How does it appear, that they are Limited by the Laws of God ?

A. I

A. I have partly told you that before. But I shall now endeavour to clear this Point even from St. Paul's own Words. St. Paul says, *Magistrates are the Ministers of God for Good*: They are therefore limited to do good by the Laws of God, if St. Paul knew God's Mind, as I presume he did.

Q. Are they only to do good?

A. That is properly the Business of a Magistrate, to do good.

Q. Has a King then no liberty allow'd him by God to do harm to his Subjects, if he pleases?

A. There's no such allowance given to Kings any where in Scripture.

Q. May we disobey Magistrates, when they do ill, and act contrary to Justice and the common Safety?

A. You may do as you please: But I think there's no Obligation upon us to obey 'em then.

Q. Why do you think we need not?

A. Because neither the Laws of God, nor Nature, those of our Country require it of us.

Q. Does not St. Paul say, *be ye subject to the higher Powers*?

A. Yes. But he says again, that *they are the Ministers of God for Good*. So that they are confin'd to do Good only, not Mischief to their Subjects.

Q. Are not Kings still the Ministers of God, tho' they do harm to their Subjects?

A. No certainly; for the very End and Design of their Magistracy or Ministry is to do Justice, and act for the Publick Good.

Q. Whose Ministers are they then?

A. I know not whose Ministers they are. But when they do Harm or Injuries (against Law and common Justice to their Subjects) they can't be God's Ministers. For St. Paul says, *Magistrates are the Ministers of God for Good*. They can't therefore be his Ministers, if they do harm.

Q. How are Kings oblig'd by the Laws of Nature to do no harm to their Subjects?

A. Eve-

A. Every rational Man is endowed with Reason: And Reason is a Law-maker, where there is no other, even in the most barbarous Nations. Now Reason prompts every Man to take care of his own Safety; and there's no Man in his Senses but what will. This therefore is one Law of Nature, to take care of our own Safety.

Q. No question but every wise King will do this, if he can. But how does this oblige him to take care of others Good or Safety?

A. If the Law of Nature or Reason prompts a Man to do good to or preserve himself, it necessarily follows that he should have the same regard to others; it not being reasonable that any Man should expect a good turn, that will not do a good Office himself. For this is another Law of Nature, to do as we would be done by; and is a Consequence of the Natural Law mentioned before. And since Kings, as well as Subjects, naturally desire their own Safety, it behoves 'em to consider as much the Safety of their Subjects as their own; each Man's Security being as dear to him, as a King's Personal Safety is to him.

Q. How is a King limited by these Laws?

A. In effect I have told you already. But I shall explain my self a little farther thus: If a King expects to be safe from Injuries, he is to treat others as he wishes to be treated himself. Consequently he is limited by the Law of Nature to act for the Security, not for the Destruction of those under his Dominion.

Q. Can an Absolute King be limited?

A. Yes, in the manner I told you just now, by the Laws of God and Nature.

Q. May an Absolute King be resisted?

A. Yes, if he transgresses the Bounds of Reason; or the Law of Nature; he may then be treated as a common Enemy to Mankind.

Q. But is it necessary that Kings should always regard other's Security as well as their own?

A. Yes

A. Yes certainly; unless it be of those that are Enemies to them or their Subjects.

Q. Suppose we should injure one another, how can a King punish us, if he is to injure no Man himself?

A. Publick Safety requires that Injuries should be punish'd by Kings, where there are Kings; or by States, where there are only States. And when a King punishes by way of Satisfaction for an Injury done, he does but do Justice, which is absolutely necessary for the good of all People. 'Tis true, the Punishment of an Offender is hurtful to the Person of the Offender. But as a King does good in the main by punishing an Offender, he is not to be accus'd of doing Injury, tho' he does hurt the Person of a Criminal: For the hurt a King does to a Criminal tends to the Security of the rest of his Subjects; especially, if they by exemplary Punishments are deterri'd from doing the like.

Q. What is a good Prince?

A. One that acts for the Common Good of his Subjects.

Q. What is a Tyrant?

A. He is one that generally makes his own Will a Law, and the Laws (where there are any establish'd in a Kingdom) Cyphers: Or, in other Words, one, that despising all Laws and natural Affection to his Fellow Creatures, deprives Men of their Civil and Religious Liberties, Rights, Lives and Estates, at his Will and Pleasure.

Q. What is a limited King?

A. One that is oblig'd by Laws, to govern by Law, for the good of his Subjects.

Q. Is Passive Obedience due to Kings, whether they be just or unjust, merciful or cruel, good or bad?

A. No certainly. For St. Paul commands no Obedience to Tyrants, but only to the good Ministers of God.

Q. But

Q. But does he not pronounce Damnation against those *that resist the Supreme Powers*, without considering whether they are Tyrants or not?

A. Undoubtedly no. For 'tis absurd to think Tyrants can be the *Ministers of God for Good*: And therefore *St. Paul* confines Men's Obedience to good Magistrates, not to Tyrants.

Q. But a Tyrant may do good by persecuting his People: Is it not sometimes for their good that they should be persecuted, tormented, and even martyr'd for Religion?

A. Yes; when God thinks fit to put 'em upon such Tryals of their Faith. The Good, People will receive by it, is a Spiritual Crown of Glory hereafter. And if they can get that, the King that persecures 'em may keep his, if God is pleas'd to have it so: But if God is not willing that the Subjects of a Tyrant should suffer, he will prevent it.

Q. How?

A. Either by his Death, or else by setting up a Power among the People stronger than his.

Q. And if by that Power they should prevent him of enjoying his Crown; is that a Divine Power?

A. Yes, by Consequence, if *all Power is from God*, as *St. Paul* says.

Q. But are *all Powers ordained of God*?

A. Yes; the Power of Subjects as well as the Power of Princes, if it be for good. God Almighty is good, and permits every thing to be done, that is done, for good: He is the only Judge which is for good, and which not. And when a Tyrannical King and his Subjects quarrel, he it is that determines it for the best.

Q. Is every thing done by Divine Permission?

A. Yes, undoubtedly; for God's Providence is over all Things that are done in the World.

Q. Does God permit Sin to be committed?

A. If every thing is done by his Permission, Sin it self is not excepted from being permitted by him.

Q. Is God the Author of Sin, if he permits it?

A. No. Men are Authors of their own Sins: He permits 'em, but is not therefore Author of 'em.

Q. Why does God permit Sin to be committed?

A. The Reason why God suffers Sin to be committed is past the Skill of us his Creatures to find out. He may perhaps let us go on from one Wickedness to another, (knowing that we will not repent) that we may receive a greater Condemnation when we come to Judgment: Or else he may suffer us to commit great Sins, that the Remembrance of 'em may sting our Consciences the more when we come to repent.

Q. Is Resistance a Sin?

A. Yes; if People have no just Cause to resist: Resistance then is the Sin of Witchcraft.

Q. Is Resistance against a Tyrant commanded by God any where in Scripture?

A. Yes; when the *Israelites* were under the immediate Care of God himself, he gave 'em Authority sometimes by his Prophets to resist their Kings, when they grew Tyrannical. Thus *Rheoboam* was resisted by Ten of his own Tribes, when he threaten'd to exercise a greater Arbitrary Power over them than his Father *Solomon*. And *Jeroboam*, that was their General, was exalted to the Throne in his stead. See the 11th. of *Kings*, Chapters the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th. There are many other Instances of this kind in the Old Testament, which I shall not now trouble you with.

Q. But does the Divine Authority of a King cease when he grows Tyrannical?

A. In my Opinion it does. This is plain by the Instance of *Rheoboam*: He had a Divine Authority, as all Kings have while they act for good; and his Authority continued till he practis'd Tyranny. But as soon as he did that, God gave the *Israelites* a Divine Authority to resist him, by his Prophet *Abijah*. Now if his Divine Authority did not cease upon his being Tyrannical, God, in commanding the *Israelites* to re-

sist him, must command his own Authority to be oppos'd: A Contradiction, of which no Man certainly will affirm God to be guilty, lest Blasphemy should be imputed to himself.

Q. Examples taken out of the Old Testament don't carry the same weight with 'em as Authorities taken out of the New. Pray therefore tell me whether Resistance against a Tyrant is commanded any where in the New Testament?

A. I can't say there are any Instructions in the New Testament, authorizing Subjects to resist bad Princes. But since no Man is forbid in the New Testament to resist a bad Prince, it can't be thought that any one that resists a bad one will suffer eternal Punishment for it. For the eternal Punishment threaten'd by *St. Paul* is only to those who resist a good Prince; or, in other Words, a *Minister of God for Good*.

Q. Is not Resistance a sinful Practice?

A. No; if we don't resist a *Minister of God for Good*.

Q. Is every Man safe from Damnation that has resisted good Princes?

A. No. For *St. Paul* says, *He that resists* (meaning I suppose the legal and just Powers) *shall receive to himself Damnation*. And that he means legal and just Powers, I have prov'd already.

Q. Is every Man secure from eternal Damnation that has resisted bad Kings or Tyrants?

A. I believe they are, in respect of their Resistance against Tyrants, however they may be in regard to Sins committed by 'em. For, as I have often told you, a Tyrant is no *Minister of God for Good*.

Q. Suppose a Limited King should exceed his Bounds, and act Arbitrarily; is it Lawful to resist him after he is Crown'd, and has taken the Coronation Oath?

A. I can't say it is Lawful to resist such a one; but such a one, not acting Lawfully, is a Tyrant: And our Laws have not yet secur'd the Persons of Tyrants

from being resisted. They have, as far as they can, taken care of the Persons of our Legal Kings, by appointing severe Punishments to those, that dare attempt them.

Q. What is a Legal King?

A. One that Governs by Law, not one that acts against it. 'Tis a contradiction to say a King is Lawful, when he does not act Lawfully. The Crown makes a King never the more Lawful, because he is Crown'd, and has taken the Coronation-Oath; No, A King must act Lawfully, as well as be Crown'd Lawfully, or else he can't in strict Reason be call'd Lawful. For he only is Lawful, that has taken an Oath to Govern by Law, and, according to that Oath, Governs: Not he that has taken the Oath, and acts contrary to it.

Q. Why did the Apostles suffer for Christianity?

A. Because God thought fit. He might have sent an Host of Holy Angels to prevent their Sufferings, if he had pleas'd: But he knew the Religion, which they suffer'd for, to be true; and that their Suffering would give a Reputation to Christianity: Which made him permit them to dye Martyrs.

Q. Did God permit the Primitive Christians to suffer upon the same Account?

A. Yes.

Q. Ought not we then to follow both their Examples?

A. Yes, if God thinks fit.

Q. Might not the Primitive Christians have rebelled against their Persecuting Tyrants, if God had permitted 'em?

A. Yes, if God by his Divine Providence had enabled 'em with a sufficient Power. But he not thinking it proper for 'em to oppose the Tyranny of their Princes, by his permission, they suffer'd Martyrdom: For which they are rewarded in Heaven.

Q. Was

Q Was not He, whom *St. Paul* order'd the *Roman* Christians to be subject to, a Tyrant?

A He is so reputed : But *St. Paul* does not tell us so?

Q Is it not strange, that *St. Paul* should command 'em to be Obedient to a Tyrant?

A No : His Command was good. For it was necessary that they should live peaceably, pay Taxes, and contribute as much as in them lay, to support that Government under which they liv'd ; lest they should, (if they did not behave themselves like the rest of the Emperor's Subjects, in paying Tribute and obeying his Laws) be disturb'd by *Cesar*, in the Exercise of their New Religion. He did not order 'em to Obey him in every Tyrannical Command, *i. e.* to turn Pagans, or dye Martyrs, if he commanded 'em. It appears rather, that in one respect at least, they were to disobey the Emperour, *viz.* in not staying in the Empire to their prejudice, tho' He should command it. For he bid 'em Fly, if they were persecuted. So that they had his Authority to Fly, tho' *Cesar* had commanded them to stay. This, I take it, was bidding them to be Disobedient to the Cruel Commands of a Tyrannical Emperour, as far as they were then able. 'Tis true, he did not order 'em to Resist him, in case he was more Cruel to them than his other Subjects : No : He knew they were not able to make Opposition against him, if they had never so much Occasion, being too few to do it. And therefore such Advice, if he had given it, would have been in vain.

Q Do you think God would have suffer'd 'em to resist, if they had Power ?

A Undoubtedly he would. For it appears by His story, that he has suffer'd other Christians, when they grew numerous and powerful, to resist there Princes. There had been no Bishop of *Rome*, where there was once *Pagan* Emperors ; no Protestantism hardly, where there was Popery ; no Christian Kings depos'd by
Christian

Christian Subjects : (which you know has been often done) if People had not been permitted by God to resist the Supream Powers.

Q. Have any Christian Kings formerly been resisted by their Christian Subjects ?

A. Yes several. In *England* almost every Arbitrary Prince, since the Conquest, has been resisted by our own Country-Men, who were Christians as well as we : Besides abundance of others in Foreign Countries.

Q. But does God's permission in the case of Resistance, amount to a Divine Allowance ?

A. Since God is not pleas'd to give his own directions in matters of Government to us now, as he did formerly to the *Israelites*, when they were his own peculiar People ; we must be contented with what his Providence in general directs. And if his Divine Providence thinks fit, that People should oppose Tyrannical Powers, by the Powers which they can assemble for their own Relief ; I know not why this may not properly be called a Divine Allowance. For if he did not allow it, he would never permit it.

Q. Should a King in these times command People to change their Religion ; may they resist him, rather than obey ?

A. They may resist him, if God thinks fit. For if God thinks fit, He will enable 'em with a sufficient Power to resist. But if God thinks it not proper for 'em to resist, but rather that they should dye Martyrs ; they must Passively submit and suffer Martyrdom, rather than actively obey the King, in changing our Religion. For we must Obey God in every thing, rather than Man.

Q. I'll trouble you but with one Question more : Does not St. Paul's Doctrine extend to all Christians as well as the *Romans*, to whom he wrote ?

A. St. Paul directed his Epistle only to the *Romans*, not to any other *Christians*. If he had, he would have said as much. And therefore it's to be question'd, whether

whether his Advice concerning Obedience to the *Higher Powers*, was design'd for any other, besides the *Romans*. But admit it extends to all Christians; yet afterwards he tells us, *Magistrates are the Ministers of God for Good*. So that Obedience is only due to them when they are good; as I have often told you.

The Conclusion.

TH U S Country-Man, I hope I have vindicated all the Resistance that has been, or will be made against Tyrants. You see plainly, that *St. Paul* is no Friend to Tyrants, but only to the *Good Ministers of God*. They are the only Persons, that can lay claim to *Passive Obedience*, and without doubt it is due to them.

But certainly *Absolute Passive Obedience* to Princes, whether they be Tyrannical or not, is a mere Imposition. And yet some of our *Clergy*, (tho' they know the Doctrine has more than once, put this Nation into mighty disorder) will assert, that *Passive Obedience* ought to be pay'd to Unjust, Illegal, and Tyrannical Powers, as well as Just, Legal, and Well-Governing Princes. As if they had a Mind to have our Limited Monarchy turn'd into an Absolute one.

To support their pretended Doctrine, they make use of the Sentences *St. Paul* speaks in one part of the 13th of the *Romans*, without taking Notice of his meaning explain'd in that Verse, where he says, that *Magistrates are the Ministers of God for Good*. Which certainly can't be construed in favour of *Passive Obedience* in any Sense, but only to Good Magistrates.

They

They may pretend that unlimited Obedience to Monarchs is the Doctrine of the Homilies and the Church of *England*. But if the Homilies mistake the Sense of *St. Paul*, (as they may, being written by Men that were not infallible like *St. Paul*) I hope they don't think People are as much oblig'd to believe them, as they are the Sacred Writings. *St. Paul* does not contend for an absolute Obedience, as the Homilies do. But some of our Clergy now, as the Writers of our Homilies did heretofore, plead for it, tho' it is down-right Blasphemy: For none but an unlimited Being can deserve an unlimited Obedience.

After proving the Doctrine to be Blasphemy, I shall now prove it to be Popish. It was vigorously and successfully preach'd by the Popish Clergy of *France*, in *Lewis* the XIIIth's and XIVth's Reigns, and was Instrumental in Ruining the Protestant Interest in that Country. It serv'd for Popish Ends, and therefore may very well be term'd Popish.

And as it has been detected to be blasphemous and Popish, so I shall not scruple to call it a Flattering Doctrine too: For by this Doctrine (which flatters Princes with more Power than really belongs to 'em) some of our Clergy have in the late Reigns advanc'd themselves to the best Preferments in the Church. And some perhaps now a-days expect the same good Fortune for advancing this Doctrine: But it's to be fear'd, while they endeavour thus to raise themselves, our Country may fall a Sacrifice to their Slavish Notions.

I don't pretend to charge our Protestant Clergy with the same Design as that of the Popish Clergy of *France*; but their present Practice methinks is so like that of the *French* Clergy in the Two Kings Reigns above-mentioned, that we have reason to fear the ill Consequences of it here.

For my Part, tho' I have a particular Regard to the Clergy of the Church of *England*; yet I cant but wonder

wonder at some of 'em for this Doctrine: For they found it (as I think I have sufficiently prov'd) sophistically upon Scripture.

'Tis a Doctrine that encourages Monarchs to use Arbitrary Methods: And it has been found in other Countries, as well as here, dangerous both to Religion and Liberty.

It is dangerous upon this Account; because a King, once persuaded by it, that he may do what he pleases, may take upon him to subvert our Religion and Laws, if he is also persuaded that he can.

In short, this Doctrine produces Tyranny; and Tyranny produces Resistance. So that preaching this Doctrine is as dangerous as preaching up Rebellion: For legal Kings would scarce ever be resisted by their own Subjects, unless they were first induc'd by this Enslaving Doctrine to insult and domineer over their Subjects.

The Histories of some of our late Reigns inform us, that the Doctrine of Absolute Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance preach'd by the Clergy, and too much believ'd by the Laity, gave Encouragement to many Arbitrary Proceedings. And if our present Clergy will rigorously maintain it still, instead of retracting it (which they ought to do, being no where countenanc'd by the Bible nor our Laws) *England*, like *France*, may too soon feel the said Effects of it.

They may tell you, Country-man, that Resistance is a Popish Doctrine, It may be so. And yet it has been found necessary in a Protestant Country.

I have told you, that the Doctrine of Absolute Obedience is Popish too: But this latter has been, and may be again, of worse Consequence than the former.

Twice, within some of our Memories, it had like to have ruin'd our Religion, and betray'd our Constitution.

It was an ill sort of a Weed that effectually poison'd *France*: And it may do the same in *England*.

'Twas this that made the *French Nation*, (once as free as ours, but too credulous of this Doctrine) imprudently part with their Liberties to their King.

'Tis true, we have, practis'd otherwise than the Clergy have taught us; and so have they: And 'twill be our wisest way still not to believe always what they say.

The whole Body of the Clergy (a very few only excepted) actually oppos'd or resisted *K. James*, in not reading his Famous Declaration in favour of the Dissenters. But I would ask them what Gospel-Rule they had, by which they can justify their Non-Obedience to so innocent a Command? At that time great Art and Industry was us'd to encourage one another to be hearty in Disobedience. 'Tis strange that they may be disobedient to Supreme Powers, and others must not. They can't plead that it was a Sin to obey *King James* in a Command which favour'd weak Consciences; It was rather a Sin in them to desire Laws should be still in force, that countenanc'd the Persecution of Dissenters, their Fellow Subjects.

I have one thing more to add against their unlimited Passive Obedience. If Kings have a Divine Authority, whether they be good or bad, and that Authority is not to be resisted, but *he that resists shall receive to himself Damnation*; I cannot see how any Soldier in the World that fights against Supreme Powers can be safe from Damnation. At this rate, the *British, Irish and Dutch*, and all the Confederates that fight against the King of *France*, are damn'd: So likewise the *French*, and their Confederates, that fight against the Queen of *England*, the Emperor, and other Supreme Powers and Princes, must be damn'd too: For all Supreme Powers, (according to the Doctrine of our Absolute Passive Obedience Clergy) whether they act justly or no, have a Divine Authority; and consequently, whether they act justly or no, are not to be resisted.

At this rate, the King of *France* must be suffer'd to go on with his Tyrannical Designs as long as he pleases: No Body must oppose him, because he has a Divine Authority.

I know it may be objected here, that *St. Paul* does not mean by these Words *Be ye subject to the Higher Powers*, that the Subjects of one Prince or Country shall never resist the Supreme Powers of another, if there be occasions.

No. He can't mean so: And yet he may, for ought any Body knows, because the Command is general.

If he meant, when he said *Be ye subject to the Higher Powers*, that the Subjects of every Government should be subject to the Governments under which they live, and them only; then he would have said, to make his Meaning more plain, *Be ye subject to the Higher Powers under which you live*. But he does not add the Words, *under which you live*: So that he may mean all Foreign Supreme Powers, as well as those under which we live.

I don't really think that *St. Paul* was against all manner of Supreme Powers, whether Foreign or Domestick, being resisted: And yet I may take the Advantage of urging this as his Meaning, as well as our Clergy have taken the Liberty to put another Meaning upon the Words *Be ye subject to the Higher Powers*.

They say the Words are general, and without Exception. And if without Exception, Foreign as well as Domestick Powers must be included in the Rule; consequently War against *Supreme Powers* of Foreign Countries must be unlawful, as well as Resistance of Subjects against their own *Supreme Powers*.

I am not really of this Opinion, nor against an Exception to be made, tho' *St. Paul* did not make one. For Exceptions must be understood sometimes where they are not express'd in Scripture: As in this Instance of *St. Paul's* Rule; or else all War, be it never so

Just, must be unlawful; because contrary to *St. Paul's* Rule.

God commands People often to go to War, as we read in the Old Testament: Nay, he is frequently said in Scripture to fight Battles for those he favour'd. He made the *Israelites* to fight against other Kings, and other Kings to fight against *Israel*. This he did, when there was a just occasion for it.

War has been countenanc'd by God himself: And his Providence of late, has been apparent in giving us, and our Confederates Success, against a King, whose Usurpations have been grievous to all his Neighbours, not to mention how intolerably burdensom he has been to his own Subjects.

I should not have insisted so much upon this Argument, but only to shew the Absurdity of a Doctrine, which, if deliver'd in such General Terms, as our Clergy have hitherto done, must necessarily make void all Pretences to War with *Popish Foreign*, as well as *Papish Domestick* Powers.

The Exception of *Foreign Supream Powers*, is not to be granted, if their Doctrine of *Non-Resistance* against *Supream Powers* is not to be Limited. For *St. Paul* does not except one *Supreme Power*, more than another. And if *St. Paul* does not except *Popish Foreign Powers*, what reason have they to except 'em, without *St. Paul's* Authority? If they will make this exception for *St. Paul*, I hope others may take the same Liberty, and make another Exception for him as well as they.

St. Paul (for ought we know) might mean, that we ought to be subject to the *Higher Powers*, if those Powers are Just. Why not this, tho' he does not express it, as well as *Unjust Supream Powers*, which he expresses no more than the other?

He might as well mean Powers that are Just, as that we should be subject to Powers, be they never so Unjust. If he had meant *Unjust Powers*, as well
as

as *Just*, he would have said so. But since he has not so explain'd himself, I think any one may except *Popish Unjust Domestic Powers*, as well as they except *Popish Unjust Foreign*. For if *St. Paul* must be interpreted with one Exception, why not with another?

I am inclin'd to believe, we are only to be subject to *Legal*, and *Just Supreme Powers*. Because these, and only these, represent *G O D, who is Just*. But as for *Unjust Powers*, they certainly have no pretence to Non-Resistance; *Injustice* being no part of Divine Authority.

'Tis certain, no King mention'd in the Old Testament, had Authority from God to be Tyrannical, or Unjust. And I dare say, none else ever had, or ever will have, such a Commission.

These are the Powers that deserve to be Resisted. And for this reason, the Confederates resist the King of *France*. Every one knows him to be Unjust and Tyrannical. And consequently it can be no Sin, to oppose him. But I cannot so well acquit the *French* for Resisting the Queen of *England*; because She is Just, Legal, and (according to *St. Paul*,) a good Minister of God.

Besides all this, the Doctrine is contradictory to the Word of God: For his Command is, *That we Obey the King*. And if we resist the King's Command, in not changing our Religion when he commands us, we do not Obey him. But some of our Clergy bid us, in case a King commands us to change our Religion, to disobey him in that, and to be Passive. Now which must we Obey? Must not we Obey God rather than them? God does not command us to be Passive; there's no such thing in the Commandments: But if they command us to be Passive, when God does not command it, do we not disobey the King, and God too, in being Passive? Obedience is fulfilling the Command of a King: And if his Command be to change our Religion, but instead of changing it we are Passive, we

are not Obedient, but rather Disobedient; because we don't fulfill the King's Command. Is not this a Contradiction to God's Command? For that bids us be Obedient to the King: And yet some of our Clergy command us to be Disobedient. I know not how to reconcile this matter, unless Obedience and Disobedience be the same thing.

I know they'll say, the King bids us do an unlawful thing, when he commands us to change our Religion. And therefore is not to be Obey'd: I grant it. So on the other hand, he commands an unlawful thing, when he commands us to submit to the Hangman, for not changing our Religion. And therefore I say, he is not to be Obey'd in this, any more than in the other. For Murder is forbid in the Commandments: But changing one Religion for another is not: And therefore we are less oblig'd to submit to Murder, than another Religion.

In short, I don't in earnest think, that we are to submit to any Religion a King bids us. For I know this to be unlawful, as well as they. No; I'm so far from this, that I think we are not oblig'd to submit to any unlawful thing whatsoever; much less to Murder, that being unlawful both by Divine, and our Humane Laws?

I hope it is now plain, that *Passive Obedience* to Kings, unless it be Legal or Just, is Irreligious. For if we suffer, what do we suffer for? Don't we suffer for disobeying the King? And if we disobey the King, how can it be *Passive Obedience*? This cannot be: It shan't be call'd any longer *Passive Obedience*, but *Passive Disobedience*. And if *Passive Disobedience* can be reconcileable to any Text of Scripture, I am much mistaken.

The Law of *England* requires our Kings to be Lawful, that is, to Govern by Law. The same Law obliges us their Subjects, to be Lawful, that is, to be Govern'd by Law. And every Man knows, (without being

being told from the Pulpit) that if he transgresses the Law, he must suffer the Penalties of it. But if our Clergy will be putting us in mind of our Duty to our Sovereign, (which I can't deny may be useful, tho not necessary for them to do) if I say they think their Rhetorick will secure People's Allegiance to our Kings better than the Law; this at least I must beg of 'em, to let their *Passive Obedience* be Legal, that is, Limited according to Law.

While they do this, they are good Patriots; but if they stretch their Doctrine beyond the Bounds of the Law, Gospel and Reason, they act illegally themselves, and ought to be reckon'd among the worst Enemies to their Country that we have.

Every Body knows, that a Legal King, that is, a King acting according to Law, *is not to be resisted upon any pretence whatsoever.* Without doubt, our Law-makers never meant, when they made the Law, in which that Expression is contain'd, *That an Illegal King, or Popery, is not to be resisted.* They would have been as much Enemies to their Country, for making an unlawful Sovereign, as well as a Lawful one, *irresistable by Law*; as these Clergy are, who preach up an *Absolute Unlimited, and Unconditional Obedience to Kings*, whether they act according to Law or no. For 'tis to be suppos'd that a King, who takes an Oath to Govern by Law, should be Legal. And while he is so, it is Treason *for the Lords or Commons, or any else of the King's Subjects, to resist him upon any pretence whatsoever.*

If this is not the true meaning of the Law, I would ask any reasonable Man, why Resistance by so many of the Nobility, Gentry and People, was made use of against K. *James*, before the late Glorious Revolution?

'Tis true, while we have a Protestant King or Queen upon the *English* Throne, I hope we shall never have occasion to fear *Arbitrary Power*. But this Doctrine so much preach'd of late, seems to look back upon
Times

Times past, as well as what may come. And if it *is* Unlawful to resist upon any pretence whatsoever; those that Preach it, must mean, that it was unlawful to resist K. James, and 'tis as much unlawful to resist his Pretended Son. For if true now, so it was then. But it is neither true now; nor was it then; but on the contrary, most Notoriously False.

But if People will be deceiv'd, let 'em be deceiv'd.

F I N I S.